



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**

**Monday, October 3, 2011**

**10:00 AM**

Present: Chair Curry, Vice Chair Friedman, Vice Chair Olivas,  
Commissioner Berger, Commissioner Franzen, Commissioner  
Kang, Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner McClaney,  
Commissioner Murray, Commissioner Rudnick, Commissioner  
Sorkin and Commissioner Trevino-Powell

Excused: Vice Chair Savelle, Commissioner Biondi and Commissioner  
Williams

1. Call to order. (11-4293)

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:11 a.m.**

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

2. Introduction of October 3, 2011, meeting attendees. (11-4292)

**Self-introductions were made.**

3. Approval of the Agenda of October 3, 2011 (11-4404)

**On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner  
McClaney (Commissioners Biondi, Olivas, Savelle and Williams being  
absent), the agenda for the October 3, 2011, was approved.**

4. Approval of Minutes from the meetings of August 15, 2011 and  
September 19, 2011. (11-4024)

**On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Vice-Chair Friedman  
(Commissioners Biondi, Olivas, Savelle, and Williams being absent), the  
Commission took the following actions:**

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- Continued the approval of minutes of August 15, 2011 to the next Commission meeting scheduled for October 17, 2011.
  - Approved the minutes of September 19, 2011, with the following corrections at the recommendation of Commissioner Sorkin:

Page 2, Item No. 4 Chair's Report, under report by Commissioner Sorkin; section was revised to read as follows:

When the Edelman Court first opened, Supervisor Edelman established a trust fund to collect a certain amount of the parking fees for special programs. However, the building and parking lot was recently transferred to the State of California (State), and the State declined to maintain the trust fund. However, the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office (CEO) agreed to maintain the \$150,000 allocation from the trust fund ~~for~~ to continue special programs. This amount is down from previous years where the average was approximately \$250,000.

This year the money will fund such program as: The Free Arts Children's Courthouse Program, Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA), Comfort for Court Kids, and other programs.

~~This~~ In the past, the fund has also paid for the refurbishment of the Edelman Court, court room seats and the installation of an awning at the entrance of the Court so parents wouldn't have to wait in the rain.

The cost for parking at the Edelman Court also sustains a \$15,000 contingency fund. ~~which is used for people who cannot afford parking or lunch.~~

Edelman Court has seen a decrease in the number of Dependency hearings resulting in the closure of one of the courtrooms at the end of the year. However, the need for an additional space at the court room in Lancaster, Court has grown, and two additional courtrooms are necessary to meet increased needs. with the closure of one of the Edelman courtrooms, will meet the growing need in the Lancaster/Palmdale area.

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)  
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## II. REPORTS

5. Chair's Report by Patricia Curry, Chair, for October 3, 2011. (11-4294)

**Chair Curry reported the following:**

- **Dr. David Sanders and DCFS Interim Director Phillip Browning will be here this afternoon following a meeting with the DCFS Executive Team to provide the Commission with an update on the Title IV-E Waiver (Waiver).**
- **The Commission's annual retreat is scheduled for November 7, 2011. Commissioner Kang indicated that he would secure a location for the Commission's retreat.**
- **The Commission's Holiday Luncheon has been tentatively scheduled for December 5, 2011. Commissioner Sorkin indicated that she would secure a venue for the Commission's holiday luncheon. Commissioner Trevino Powell agreed to assist Commissioner Sorkin with the coordination of the luncheon.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

### **III. DISCUSSION (ELECTION OF OFFICERS)**

**6. Presentation of the 2011-12 Commission Nomination Slate and Election of Officers.**

- **Martha Trevino-Powell, Election Chair (11-4295)**

**Commissioner Trevino-Powell presented the 2011-12 Commission for Children and Families Slate of Officers. The candidate for the position of Chair is as follows:**

- **Patricia Curry**  
**Chair Curry thanked everyone who nominated and supported her during the last two years. Chair Curry is hopeful for the future and looks forward to improving the lives of children.**

**The candidates for the position of Vice-Chairs are as follows:**

- **Genevra Berger**  
**Commissioner Berger indicated that although she is relatively new to the Commission, she worked for DCFS for many years and has extensive knowledge on child welfare. Commissioner Berger is looking forward to working to improve the quality of life for children.**

- **Dr. Sunny Kang**  
Commissioner Kang indicated that he is also relatively new to the Commission and can offer a new perspective. As the current Chair of the Faith-Based Committee Commissioner Kang looks forward to building new partnerships.
- **Susan Friedman**  
Vice-Chair Friedman indicated that as a current Vice-Chair she has greatly enjoyed working with Chair Curry. As current Chair of the Mental Health Workgroup, she is excited about the progress that this group has accomplished.
- **Stacey Savelle**  
Vice-Chair Savelle was unable to attend today's meeting.

After discussion, on motion of Commissioner Murray, seconded by Commissioner McClaney, (Commissioners Biondi, Olivas, Savelle, and Williams being absent), the 2011-12 Commission for Children and Families Slate of Officers was approved.

*(Vice Chair Olivas joined the meeting at 10:51 a.m.)*

Following the count of the ballots, Commissioner Trevino Powell reported that the Commission reelected Patricia Curry as Chair, and that Commissioners Susan Friedman, Dr. Sunny Kang, and Geneva Berger were elected/reelected Vice-Chairs of the Commission for the 2011-12 Fiscal Year.

Therefore, on motion of motion Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner McClaney, (Commissioners Biondi, Savelle, and Williams being absent), the 2011-12 Commission for Children and Families Election of Officers was approved.

#### **IV. PRESENTATIONS**

7. Presentation on the Court Appointed Special Advocates Program (CASA) Los Angeles.

Jacquie Dolan, Founding President, CASA Los Angeles  
Dilys Tosteson Garcia, Executive Director, CASA Los Angeles (11-1986)

**Ms. Dolan and Ms. Garcia reported the following:**

- **The CASA/LA Program began with a Federal start up grant for a four-year period. Unfortunately, the County of Los Angeles (County) did**

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not have the funds to sustain the CASA/LA Program. Therefore, former Children and Families Commissioner Hal Brown and Ms. Dolan developed a private-public partnership.

- The organization lost all Los Angeles Superior Court funding earlier this year, and has been reorganized as a 100% self-supporting, non-profit entity. Although CASA/LA no longer receives financial support from the courts, they provide “gratis leases” in Monterey Park and Lancaster, administrative support, computer equipment and telephones. CASA/LA transformed its funding and to date government funding only accounts for approximately one third of its budget. It is expected that funding will be decreased the future.
- For approximately five months in 2010, the program took no new referrals and focused on serving the existing caseload with fewer resources while the organization formulated a plan to move forward as a non-profit. By July 2010, CASA/LA began accepting new referrals again.
- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10, CASA/LA served 569 children with long-term advocacy and another 7,200 in shelter care and with Glamour Gowns. With half the budget and a third of the staff, advocacy services continued uninterrupted thanks to the dedication of CASA/LA’s volunteer child advocates, staff and CASA/LA’s Board of Directors that rallied to support them. CASA/LA successfully completed its first full FY as a 100% non-profit community supported organization.
- In FY 2010-11 CASA/LA served 568 children with long term advocacy and another 7,500 in shelter care. CASA/LA volunteers offer a boost to an overwhelmed social services system at a bargain price. For \$2,500 a year, CASA/LA can provide an individual dedicated advocate for a child in foster care. National CASA estimates that every child steered away from truancy and crime saves the State of California (State) between \$2.5 and \$4 million over the lifetime of that child. Children with CASA interventions do better in school, return to foster care at a much lower rate, access more services and achieve permanency at a higher rate.
- This year CASA/LA is hopeful that it can to expand its volunteers/advocates to serve 800 children which will necessitate the recruiting and training of 200 new volunteers rather than the usual 100. CASA/LA’s long term strategic plan goal is to reach 1,000 children annually with long term advocacy by 2013 and by 2015 aim to serve 2,500 children and youth per year.

- **CASA/LA has established specialized learning tracks for an Early Childhood Initiative in which it will be piloting early assignment of “baby” CASAs working closely with individual court rooms. Private foundations such as Atlas and Deutsch have funded these efforts along with Federal funds.**
- **CASA/LA is actively seeking funding to develop a similarly specialized track for applying best practices to its work with Transition Age Youth. The process involves bringing family-finding and relational competencies more to the forefront of CASA advocacy again with specialized training in collaboration with community partners such as the Child Welfare Initiative and Hollygrove. CASA/LA’s goal is to provide every child with a CASA advocate by 2020.**

**In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Dolan and Ms. Garcia added the following:**

- **The CASA/LA volunteers are guides for the children through the child welfare system. They provide support and open doors for children. In addition, CASA/LA does not represent an agency, government or person, resulting in family members feeling more comfortable about sharing information with the CASA/LA volunteers. Information obtained through CASA/LA advocates is then conveyed to the Juvenile Court Judge who then has a better foundation to make a decision. CASA/LA volunteers generally only serve one or two children at a time which is significantly lower than caseloads of a social worker or attorney.**
- **The average length of a case is 24-36 months and CASA/LA volunteers generally stay during the entire length of the case. There are no formal follow-ups on children who have been served by CASA/LA volunteers; however, connections and relationships often develop and many times youth stay in contact with staff and inform them on their well-being.**
- **There is a national appropriation of the Federal budget for National CASA, and through a competitive grant process, local CASA’s compete for these Federal funds. CASA/LA receives approximately \$50,000 from that source. However, CASA/LA now applies directly to Federal grants as they become available.**
- **CASA/LA volunteers work with youth of all ages and they spend a considerable amount of time with adults involved with that child’s life.**

- In addition, the very nature of working with younger children is different and CASA/LA will have to adjust their training for volunteers serving young children.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, (Commissioners Biondi, Savelle, and Williams being absent), this item was received and filed.

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS](#)

8. Presentation on the collaborative efforts by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Faith-Based Community to assist at risk children and families.
  - Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner/Chair Faith-Based Committee
  - Faith-Based Community Stakeholders (11-4296)

**Faith-Based Committee Chair Kang introduced the following presenters:**

- Adella Estrada - Childrens Services Administrator, DCFS
- Chris Jahang – Mentor/Volunteer, Impacting Hearts
- Bill Bedrosian - Executive Director, Olive Crest

Commissioner Kang invited Ms. Estrada, Mr. Jahang and Mr. Bedrosian so they may present the Commission with the value and great benefit that partnerships between the faith-based community and DCFS can have.

**Mr. Bedrosian reported the following:**

- Community involvement, especially from the faith-based community has been an important topic throughout Mr. Bedrosian's career as a social worker. Mr. Bedrosian's parents have been foster parents for over thirty years and are very involved with the faith-based community in the Chicago area. Upon his arrival to Los Angeles, it was apparent to Mr. Bedrosian that there was a disconnect between DCFS and the faith-based community.
- One of the reasons for the disconnect between DCFS and the faith-based community can be attributed to DCFS' assertion as the foremost experts in child welfare. As a result, the faith-based community was really overlooked as a significant contributor in caring for children in the welfare system even though they wanted to be more involved.

Mr. Jahng reported the following:

- *Impacting Hearts* is a non-profit 501(c)(3) mentoring organization where Mr. Jahng serves as a volunteer and mentor to youth. They are an entirely volunteer run non-profit organization dedicated to building relationships and mentoring youth for a brighter future.
- *Impacting Hearts* hosts youth club nights once a week at each one of their five locations. Each location has a unique name and their own dynamics. The locations bring in volunteers from the faith-based community and offer youth a safe and fun environment for interaction. From these relationships, youth learn how to respect authority and respect one another. In addition, youth were also referred to other agencies and resources when needed.
- One of the youth clubs is led by the California Youth Connection (CYC), former foster youth leading current foster youth. In the Compton office, youth from Long Beach and Hawaiian Gardens have also become the leaders and mentors for these children.
- There some stigmas associated with faith-based centers. For example, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) tried to partner with the faith-based organization; but because of legal issues, they were unable to do so. *Impacting Hearts* created a second organization, the *Immerging Light* that is not a faith-based driven organization, but rather an educational organization, allowing the partnership with the LAPD. The LAPD now allows the use of buses for trips to Los Angeles Clipper games, and to Magic Mountain.
- Upon becoming involved with *Impacting Hearts*, Mr. Jahng reported that his mentor warned him that approximately 80 percent of the youth that he would come across, he would never see again. Although that is the sad reality, Mr. Jahng values every moment he spends with youth and hopes they can remember what they learned.

Ms. Estrada reported the following:

- Faith-based work has been a tremendous experience. The work is very labor intensive, and calls for close attention to detail and open communication. When Commissioner Kang contacted Ms. Estrada, he inquired as to what her role with DCFS was.



- **Ms. Estrada informed him that she has six different roles in the South County Office; she uses her position to develop and maintain relationships between DCFS and the faith-based community in the South County.**
- **One of the most important factors to success with the faith-based organizations has been effective communication, engaging employees and those in the community. Ms. Estrada does a great deal of community outreach at parks, churches, businesses, and the local media to promote community involvement. One event that Ms. Estrada is especially proud of is the Family Fun Day event. Family Fun Day is large event where several faith-based congregations and families in the community gather for a fun yet educational day. The faith-based community also provides information to the general community about what resources the faith-based organizations can offer.**

**Commissioner Kang added that working with youth in the offices was an incredible experience. During Christmas, Ms. Estrada asked social workers to request from the youth on what they wanted for Christmas, and through this effort, youth received what they asked for.**

**Mr. Bedrosian concluded by adding that, there is no position for what Ms. Estrada does, engaging the faith-based community is not her job, it is part of the many responsibilities that she has. In addition he added that unless the DCFS Regional Administrator prioritizes engaging the faith-based community, it does not get done. Currently, approximately three or four offices engage the faith-based community. Mr. Bedrosian requested that Commissioners speak to their respective Board Offices to inform them of the importance of the faith-based community in DCFS. In Chicago faith-based resources have diverted approximately 2,000 children a year from child welfare system and saved millions of dollars a year.**

**Chair Curry thanked Commissioner Franzen, former Chair of the Faith-Based Committee who has Chaired this Committee for several years. Chair Curry also thanked past Faith-Based Committee members, Commissioners: McClaney, Murray, Trevino-Powell, and Sorkin.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, (Commissioners Biondi, Savelle and Williams being absent), this item was received and filed.**

**9. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Status Update.**

- Philip L. Browning, Interim DCFS Director (11-4297)

**Interim Director Browning reported the following:**

- **Dr. David Sanders, of Casey Family Programs met with the DCFS Executive Team to discuss the Waiver particularly from the Federal level. DCFS is continuing to move forward with Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12). Approximately half of the cases identified as eligible for AB 12 have been reviewed and DCFS has approximately a 40 percent conversion rate which is consistent with the rest of the State. DCFS is hopeful that all of the cases will be reviewed by the end of the year. In addition, DCFS may be able to reconstruct some of the cases in which records were missing.**
- **DCFS is continuing to work with the Kaite A. panel who are in town to participate in the Quality Service Reviews in the El Monte office. DCFS recently celebrated Family Reunification Week in which approximately 6,000 families had been reunited in 2011.**

**Dr. Sanders, former DCFS Director and currently Vice-President of Casey Family Programs, reported the following in relation to the Waiver:**

- **Many of the DCFS staff that worked on the Waiver in 2003 are no longer with the Department. The initial considerations for the Waiver in 2003 were different then considerations today.**
- **The Waiver was intended to test flexible funding for system change. The consideration for system change is important because it's intent was not to test specific ideas; but to look at how the County could improve in terms of outcomes for children in post-Waiver versus pre-Waiver. Approximately \$300 \$400 million in Federal resources were available for children in Los Angeles County; however, those resources either paid for room and board or for administrative costs for staff. The resources did not pay for outcomes, such as safety or timely permanency. The intent of the Waiver was also to free up money to pay for improving outcomes for children and to actually align outcomes with the system. In addition, the intent of the Waiver was also to free up the County match that could be used for improving outcomes for children. The intention wasn't to wait for a reduction in placements then reinvest, but to think upfront about how the hundreds of millions of dollars that could be spent on improving outcomes for children.**

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- Dr. Sanders referenced data in his handout titled, “LA County: Trends in Child Welfare,” available on the following Berkley Website: ([http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare/](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/)), which is a California Department of Social Services / University of California at Berkeley collaboration. The report data reveals that safety is getting worse and the trend line shows that safety in the form of the reoccurrence of maltreatment as well as reentry into care was improving through 2006-07, but has consistently gotten worse. The highest group for reentry and probably reoccurrence of maltreatment was 0-5 year-olds. Safety in placement has also been problematic and reveals that placement is not the answer. Entry rates into the child welfare system in Los Angeles County are significantly higher in every age range than in Cook County, Harris County and New York City. DCFS has significantly improved its timelines to permanency and adoption. It also appears that length of stay in care has also gotten better. However, aging out of the system is a problem and it is getting worse.
  - The areas in which DCFS should be highlighting in terms of the Waiver are safety, continued focus on timely permanency, emotional and mental health needs, especially for older youth. The Department should consider the following areas as it relates to the Waiver;
    1. Prevention is critical because maintaining the number of entries into care will be difficult considering the higher rate of abuse in the community.
    2. Target Reunification, Adoption and Kinship aftercare particularly for youth between ages 1-5.
    3. Providing crisis support to foster homes may be a consideration.
    4. Continue to target both permanency and other efforts related to mental health needs for 15-17 year-olds.
    5. The number of youth aging out is exceptionally high and appears to be going up.
    6. The ability to use data at office, at the worker and supervisor levels to determine where resources need to be targeted among the DCFS offices.
  - Dr. Sanders referenced a distributed a report by Bryan Samuels, Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In this report, Commissioner Samuels emphasized the impact that abuse and/or neglect has on a child and the need for this impact to be recognized. While the focus on safety/permanency is critical, the effects are lifelong and affect emotional as well as physical functioning.

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- **Over use of medication is also an issue that Commissioner Samuels' report highlights. The over use of medication often masks the impact of abuse and/or neglect and that is something that needs to be focused on significantly in every child welfare system. Commissioner Samuels also notes that the placement of child is often not as important as the services he/she receives. There continues to be issues with children in post adoption, reunification and kinship; therefore, post permanency services are critical.**
  - **Commissioner Samuels hypothesizes that with a smaller number of children in care, particularly with a smaller number of older children, will likely present more difficult mental and emotional health issues than in the past with higher number of children in placement. In order to look at who is being served and design services that meet those needs it is possible to identify the most likely mental health diagnosis to be experienced by children in foster care. In addition, it may not be a mental health diagnosis; it may be a clinical symptom profile. Commissioner Samuels suggests that there are a set of evidence-based practices that work for those mental health conditions and as a system, it would be wise to know what is needed based on the children that are in care or being served in their home. Thus, the Waiver can be used to get those services.**

**Interim Director Browning indicated that he spoke to one of the staff members for Dr. Charles Sophy, Medical Director for DCFS, who stated that DCFS has the data on the number of youth receiving medication, but was not sure who has reviewed this information. Interim Director Browning would like to know how many children under the care of DCFS are receiving medication and what those medications are.**

**In response to questions posed by the Commission, Dr. Sanders added the following:**

- **Dr. Sanders was unable to determine whether or not the initiatives DCFS invested in using Waiver funds were successful; however, the data suggests a need to improve safety. Having a clear picture of who is being served and who seems to be at highest risk going to be critical moving forward. Once this is done, DCFS can link strategies that can be funded by the Waiver to have improvements in those areas.**
- **The trend for entries varies by jurisdiction; however there are some similarities particularly with the younger children across jurisdictions.**

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In addition, in-care is very different today than it was in 2003 when the strategies for the Waiver were designed. In its simplest terms, the Waiver is a mechanism to use resources in a different way. Dr. Sanders indicated that it is difficult to say if the Waiver “worked” because he does not know if the resources were used to improve safety or were they used in other areas.

Interim Director Browning stated that the Department is open to change; however, the challenge as Dr. Sanders stated is establishing a goal driven by metrics. DCFS has a huge amount of data; the challenge is how to get the data into a manageable form so the worker and the supervisor can understand what is going on.

- Dr. Sanders indicated that looking at aftercare is just as important as looking at any pre-abuse or neglect support. Dr. Sanders did not have any data regarding disproportionality in placement within Cook County, Harris County and New York City. There is increasingly fascinating research that is focusing on smaller geographic boundaries within larger jurisdictions. Getting down to the office level with greater clarity tells a much better story than looking at the entire County as a whole. In addition, by looking at smaller geographic areas, services can be tailored to meet the specific needs of that particular community.
- Drilling down the information and determining if there is a negative correlation between the improvement timelines to permanency could have been driving the higher reentry rates are exactly the types of questions that should be asked. Dr. Sanders indicated that when he was the DCFS Director, the Commission would review and analyze cases. In addition, it seems that when determining where resources should be allocated, it is critical that they be driven by what you’re trying to accomplish, what the current situation is and conducting analysis.

Chair Curry thanked both Dr. Sanders and Interim Director Browning for making time to attend the Commission meeting and sincerely appreciated the great information that they presented.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, (Commissioners Biondi, Savelle and Williams being absent), this item was received and filed.

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

**V. MISCELLANEOUS**

**Matters Not Posted**

10. Matters not on the posted agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (11-4298)

**There were none.**

**Public Comment**

11. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (11-4299)

**There were none.**

**Announcements**

12. Announcements for the meeting of October 3, 2011. (11-4300)

**There were none.**

**Adjournment**

13. Adjournment for the meeting of October 3, 2011. (11-4301)

**The meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.**